

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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TAGS: PFOR, CY

SUBJ: ARCHBISHOP MAKARIOS' DECEMBER 10 PRESS CONFERENCE

SUMMARY: MEETING WITH FOREIGN AND CYPRIOT JOURNALISTS, ARCHBISHOP DISPLAYED HIS MASTERY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS BUT ADDED LITTLE SUBSTANCE TO WHAT HE HAS ALREADY PUBLICLY STATED. EMPHASIZED THAT CLERIDES WOULD REMAIN AS GREEK CYPRIOT REPRESENTATIVE AND NEGOTIATOR, THAT WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS TO HIM WOULD BE FORTHCOMING IN NEXT FEW DAYS AND NEGOTIATIONS WOULD PROBABLY RESUME WITHIN NEXT TEN DAYS, THAT WITHIN COMMON LINE PARAMETERS AGREED UPON IN ATHENS CLERIDES WOULD HAVE ABSOLUTE FREEDOM TO NEGOTIATE.

1. IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT ARCHBISHOP REPEATED HIS BELIEF THAT CLERIDES/DENKTASH TALKS SHOULD BE CONTINUED AND WARNED AGAINST A SOLUTION GIVING EXCESS PRIVILEGES TO ONE SIDE AT EXPENSE OF OTHER. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION RE DENKTASH'S INTIMATION THAT DENKTASH AND MAKARIOS SHOULD NEGOTIATE AS EQUAL LEADERS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES, ARCHBISHOP EMPHASIZED THAT CLERIDES WOULD BE A BETTER NEGOTIATOR AND THAT IN ANY CASE HE
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(THE ARCHBISHOP) WAS NOT A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GREEK COMMUNITY

BUT RATHER OF ALL OF THE PEOPLE OF CYPRUS. NOTED THAT WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS TO CLERIDES WOULD BE FORTHCOMING "IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS" AND THAT CLERIDES WOULD HAVE ABSOLUTE FREEDOM TO NEGOTIATE WITHIN LIMITS OF COMMON LINE AGREED UPON IN ATHENS. STATED THAT STARTING DATE FOR NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE UP TO NEGOTIATORS THEMSELVES BUT HE EXPECTED TALKS TO RESUME WITHIN NEXT TEN DAYS. HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE THAT TALKS WOULD GO ON INDEFINITELY.

2. ASKED TO COMMENT ON DENKTASH'S ASSERTION THAT SUPERPOWER GUARANTEES OF CYPRIOT INDEPENDENCE ARE UNNECESSARY, ARCHBISHOP STATED THAT MAIN POINT IS TO FIND A SOLUTION AND THEN IT WOULD BE EASY TO FIND GUARANTEES SATISFACTORY TO BOTH SIDES. NOTED THAT SO FAR GUARANTEES OF CYPRUS' INDEPENDENCE HAVE BEEN WORTHLESS.

3. RESPONDING TO JOURNALISTS' OBSERVATION THAT POPULATION TRANSFER WHICH HE OPPOSED HAS ALREADY TAKEN PLACE, ARCHBISHOP SAID THAT DESPITE THIS HE BELIEVED A SPIRIT OF GOOD WILL WOULD PRODUCE A SOLUTION.

4. ASKED BY NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT TO COMMENT ON ALLEGATIONS BY HIS SUPPORTERS OF NATO/CIA INVOLVEMENT IN CYPRUS, ARCHBISHOP REPLIED "I DON'T WANT TO COMMENT SINCE I HAVE NO CLEAR INFORMATION". IN REPLY TO WASHINGTON POST QUESTION AS TO WHETHER HE HAD BEEN WARNED BY AMBASSADOR DAVIES OF JULY COUP, MAKARIOS REPLIED THAT THE AMBASSADOR HAD SEEN HIM THREE DAYS BEFORE COUP AND ASKED HIM IF HE SHARED VIEW OF OTHERS THAT SITUATION WAS DANGEROUS. "BUT", ARCHBISHOP WENT ON, "HE DID NOT TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT A COUP". ARCHBISHOP ADDED THAT THERE HAD BEEN SUCH TALK OF POSSIBLE COUP BUT THAT HE HAD NOT PERSONALLY BELIEVED JUNTA WOULD ACT SO IRRATIONALLY.

5. RE INTERNAL SECURITY AND EOKA B OPPOSITION ARCHBISHOP STATED HE WOULD ACT IN LIGHT OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS BUT NOTED THAT FOR THE TIME BEING THERE EXISTS A DETENTE WHICH HE HOPED WOULD CONTINUE.

6. ARCHBISHOP DUCKED SUBSTANTIVE REPLIES TO MOST OTHER QUESTIONS
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INVOLVING SPECIFICS OF THE "COMMON LINE", POSSIBLE UNSC ACTION, AND WHETHER OR NOT HE WOULD RESHUFFLE HIS GOVERNMENT. IN REPLY TO OTHER QUESTIONS HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR "CERTAIN INITIATIVES" ON RESOLVING ECCLESIASTICAL ISSUE, VOICED CONFIDENCE THAT ALL JUNTA OFFICERS IN NATIONAL GUARD HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN AND THAT THERE WAS NO DANGER OF A NEW COUP.
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